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with the last-mentioned works to have acquired the habit of opening them readily to any desired family or genus of plants, he will also be annoyed because the sequence of families in the present work is not at all the same. These differences come from an effort to follow the sequence of groups of the great German treatise of Engler and Prantl, on the families of plants, and the nomenclature rules of the Botanical Club of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as exemplified in the check list of the plants of eastern North America, published by its committee in 1893-94. Less objection will be made to the first than to the second of these changes from American custom, and, notwithstanding the difficulties of the undertaking, the authors of the book have been reasonably consistent in carrying out their ideas, so that it is going to prove an important factor in fixing the names preferred by the Neo-American school upon our plants; whether wisely or unwisely, it may be left for the future to show.

T.

Detmer and Moor's Physiology.¹ — The guide to practical laboratory work in a comparatively new field never comes amiss, and although several such guides in vegetable physiology are now in the hands of English-speaking teachers, this translation of Detmer's well-known *Praktikum* is a very welcome addition to their shelves. Nature study is frequently spoken of as a means of training the power of observation, but it is useful even to a greater extent as an educational factor, because it is an experimental study if properly pursued. Experimentation is largely a matter of personal ingenuity, like mechanical invention. In any direction, its foundations are laid by a small number of specially gifted men. But just as soon as their methods are understood, they may be applied by hundreds of other students to the solving of problems that are everywhere awaiting solution. Every book which, like Detmer's, outlines the general field of study and indicates the simplest apparatus and methods for attacking it, paves the way for the elaboration of refinements in the investigation of special subjects.

The topics treated are : the physiology of nutrition, and the physiology of growth and movements resulting from irritability. For these

¹ *Practical Plant Physiology*. An introduction to original research for students and teachers of natural science, medicine, agriculture, and forestry. By Dr. W. Detmer. Translated from the second German edition by S. A. Moor. 8°, pp. xix + 555. 184 illustrations. London, Swan, Sonnenschein & Co. New York, The Macmillan Company.

subjects, it is really an outline text-book, with directions for the practical demonstration of the facts which in an ordinary text-book stand simply as statements on authority. The student who has worked through it should be an expert and well-trained physiologist; if not, he may ask himself if he had not better turn his attention to other things. Unfortunately, the usual college elective does not allow time for making expert specialists, and the teacher who can devote but a short time to experimental physiology is likely to prefer one of the smaller and cheaper books for the direct guidance of his classes, though he cannot afford to allow them to do their work without constant reference to the more comprehensive handbooks, foremost among which stands this of Detmer.

T.

Minnesota Botanical Studies. — In January, 1894, *Bulletin No. 9 of the Geological and Natural History Survey of Minnesota* was begun as an occasional serial, the intention being to page the parts consecutively until a volume should be completed. In March, 1898, the twelfth part was issued, completing the first volume of the *Bulletin*. This volume contains fifty separate articles by twenty authors, dealing with a wide range of subjects, by no means confined to Minnesota geographically. It is illustrated by eighty-one plates or maps, and, as completed with its very full index, contains 1093 pages octavo. While unlimited praise cannot be bestowed on all of its contents, it is a valuable addition to the shelves of any botanical library which may be fortunate enough to possess it; but one cannot help wondering at the liberality of the State Survey of Minnesota in allowing so much matter wholly foreign to the usual purposes of such surveys to be published and distributed at the expense of the state.

T.

Edible Fungi. — To the already rather copious literature intended to facilitate discrimination between edible and poisonous fungi, Professor Farlow has recently added a small conservatively written article, which has been reissued in pamphlet form from the *Yearbook of the Department of Agriculture* for 1897.¹ Limiting himself to a very few species of both classes, which are accurately and yet tersely described in language which should be readily understood by any person of intelligence, the writer states a few rules which "should not be neglected by the beginner" in the following words: 1. Avoid

¹ Farlow, W. G. Some Edible and Poisonous Fungi. Washington, Government Printing Office, 1898. United States Department of Agriculture, Division of Vegetable Physiology and Pathology, *Bull. No. 15*. 18 pp., 10 pls., 8°.